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Letter dated 9 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ashgabat Declaration on the Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development, which was adopted on 4 September 2014 as a final document of the High-level International Conference on the Role of Transit Transport Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development, held in Ashgabat on 3 and 4 September 2014 (see annex).

At the Conference, which was hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan and co-organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Road Transport Union, participants discussed financing mechanisms, policy and technical obstacles to increasing the integration of national economies and transport systems in the global economy.

Facilitating transport across borders is one of the key elements of economic development, which in turn is inevitably linked to sustainability. Growth of transportation capacities has now become a serious factor in geopolitics and a powerful resource for integration; such growth can provide greater economic and political incentives for States and regions to promote the interoperability of their strategic interests by connecting the vast territories and their production and resource potential and ensuring mutual flows of goods and services. Those opportunities are the drivers of the world economy, guaranteeing its protection against deformation, catastrophic recessions and development gaps between countries and regions. Modern, extensive and safe international transport infrastructure is, today, an imperative of global development, dictating the necessity to bring the transport agenda to the United Nations platform.

The outcome of the Conference is one of the valuable contributions to the international efforts to tackle pressing challenges in the development of sustainable multimodal transport systems.

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I would be very grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 9 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ashgabat Declaration on the Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development

We, the ministers and deputy ministers of foreign affairs, transport and other related ministries and high-level government officials of the member countries and heads and representatives of international organizations working in the area of international transport attending the High-level International Conference on the Role of Transit Transport Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development, held in Ashgabat on 3 and 4 September 2014,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, entitled "The future we want", in which the Conference noted that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development,

Recognizing the important role that environmentally sound, safe, efficient, clean, reliable and affordable transit transport corridors for efficient movement of goods and people play in supporting sustainable economic growth, improving the social welfare of people and enhancing international cooperation and trade among countries,

Highlighting the role of international roads and railways, intermodal logistics centres and dry ports, global logistics and supply chains, integration of transport modes, regulatory frameworks, facilitated border crossing and customs clearance, appropriate technologies, energy-efficient and low-carbon transport, and maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure in promoting seamless international transit transport,

Emphasizing the need to harmonize and improve transport and border-crossing infrastructure and facilities and services along the international transit transport corridors,

Noting the importance of the United Nations Development Account global project (Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) on strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration, the primary objective of which is to enhance customs-to-customs exchange of electronic information in the field of transit,

Noting also the importance of the United Nations Development Account project, to be implemented by ESCAP and ECE, entitled "Strengthening connectivity of countries in South and Central Asia, particularly landlocked and least developed countries, to link with subregional and regional transport and trade networks", which will focus on developing broader transport corridors linking South and Central Asian countries and identifying the physical and institutional infrastructure requirements that would be needed to make them operational,

Underlining the importance of addressing physical and non-physical barriers to developing and using the international transit transport corridors in the respective participating countries,

Recalling various General Assembly resolutions on improving global road safety and the need to develop plans to improve road safety along international road transit corridors in line with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020,

Stressing that the special development needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and transition economies need to be taken into account during the development of sustainable transit transport systems,

Underscoring the need to mobilize additional financial resources, including through the promotion of public-private partnerships in the development of transport infrastructure and services, in achieving inclusive and sustainable development,

Thanking the Government of the Republic of Turkmenistan for hosting the international conference in Ashgabat, and ECE, ESCAP, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Road Transport Union for their collaboration in planning and organizing the conference,

Declare the following:

1. *Resolve* to develop and implement policies and strategies at the national levels that will enhance the economic, environmental and social sustainability of transit transport corridors;

2. *Agree* to continue to accord priority to develop, operationalize and take measures to improve infrastructure and facilities, and facilitate cross-border transport and customs clearance along the international, regional and interregional transit transport corridors;

3. *Urge* participating countries and other related stakeholders to address the issues of improving transit transport in the following areas:

(a) Working collaboratively to designate and prioritize transit transport corridors and develop operational frameworks;

(b) Promoting an integrated and intermodal approach to the planning and development of infrastructure and facilities and the provision of services along the designated and prioritized international transit transport corridors;

(c) Strengthening international cooperation to develop and operationalize international transit transport corridors;

(d) Continuous harmonization of national legislation with international norms and standards with the aim to facilitate the international freight transport, transit and border crossing procedures;

(e) Enhancing transport access to and from landlocked developing countries;

(f) Mobilizing financial resources, including through the promotion of public-private partnerships;

(g) Using innovative technologies to improve the efficiency of transport operation and services;

(h) Developing human resources through the implementation of programmes on enhancing the skills and qualifications of transport personnel;

(i) Improving road safety along the international road transit corridors;

4. *Invite* participating countries that have not yet done so to consider joining the relevant international transport conventions, agreements and frameworks developed under the auspices of ECE and ESCAP;

5. *Call for* the enhancement of networking and periodic consultation among related stakeholders involved in the development and operation of the designated international transit transport corridors;

6. *Request* the United Nations organizations, the related international financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, the private sector and international organizations to coordinate their efforts and collaborate to mobilize financial and technical assistance to participating countries for the sustainable and inclusive development of transit transport corridors.

Adopted on 4 September 2014 at Ashgabat